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21, 1452

A

GENERAL ADDRESS
TO THE
REPRESENTATIVES
OF
Great Britain,
ON
IMPORTANT NATIONAL SUBJECTS,
AGITATING
AT THE PRESENT PERIOD.

BY AN
ELECTOR, M.A.

Affirmat esse hanc Philosophiæ, et quidè pulcherrimam, par-
tem, agere Negòtium publicum, cognoscere, judicare.

PLIN. EPIST. Lib. prim.

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Request of Charles Sumner R. V. D.
of Boston
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28 April 1874

GENERAL ADDRESS, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

UNBIASSED by party, and unexpecting of favour, an obscure individual obtrudes himself on your notice, trusting, that the purity of his intentions will supercede the necessity of an introduction, and the sincere suggestions of his mind ultimately tend to the benefit of his country. Without further apology, this humble Elector, freely, though perhaps presumptuously, addresses the members of the most august and powerful assembly in the universe.

In your conduct the fate of empires is implicated: your simple *ayes*, and *noes*, have power sufficient to controul fleets and armies; to introduce the olive of peace, or emit the thunder of war; to bless millions with liberty, or

subject nations to slavery; to diffuse opulence and plenty to the remotest realms, or devastate by rapine and massacre the most fertile and populous regions. With such powers are you intrusted. For the application of such powers, you are responsible to your God, your king, your electors, and country. You are equally responsible for every single vote, as an impannelled jurymen for his verdict. His decision affects only the life of *one* culprit, on your assent or dissent the lives of thousands of thousands may depend. Would to God! that such sentiments were uniformly impressed upon your minds, and that your tongues vibrated in unison with your thoughts. Would to God! that all, and each of you, would think for himself and act for himself; that your throats re-echoed not the sounds of your opening leader; that you dashed not in the chace, sometimes overthrowing a fence, sometimes destroying the spring-wheat of hope; now plunging perhaps in a pond, whose leaks have exceeded its supply, and whose sides will require considerable puddling before a reservoir can

can be empounded, that will enable you to gain the bank on vantage ground. Like a motley and incongruous pack, composed of the deep-mouthed southern hound and the yelping beagle, the generous talbot, and the fawning spaniel, the faithful mastiff, and the sculking lurcher, that will pursue various prey; the orator and the babbler, the statesman and the courtier, the patriot and the sycophant, follow different game, and run in different directions. The noble blood of the Howards and Stanleys *should* bravely encounter the tyger and the boar; the boasted race of Ruffel *should* gloriously exterminate the wolfish despoilers of the realm; the watchful descendant of Chatham should guard the house of his royal master from midnight plunderers and assassins; whilst the mongrels of the day will seize the heels of the patient bull, bite him till he bleeds, and feed upon his blood.—Yet divide these into *two* packs, and they will be found so well trained by their respective huntsmen, so well brought up by the whippers-in, and so few to run counter; that they will pursue till death, or stop in full cry, at the

crack of the leader's whip, whether in chace of the royal stag, or toiling under ground after the burrowing fox. But to descend from the flights of figure and metaphor, to plain and simple language.

Is it not strange that out of 558 senators, (consisting in round numbers of 100 county knights, 120 branches of nobility, 100 dependent courtiers, 70 independent country gentlemen, 70 bankers and merchants, 60 naval and military officers, and 40 lawyers,) is it not strange that there are scarce * *five* out of this numerous body, whose votes cannot be ascertained, on any important question, previous to its discussion?—Will an upright magistrate decide upon a cause from ex-parte evidence? Will an honest juror condemn a prisoner without hearing his defence? Or will a court-martial prejudge and cashier an officer without entering on a circumstantial examination? The fair fame and character of these men, so acting, would be tarnished for ever. The magistrate would be charged with

* Sir Robert Walpole calculated to one vote.

bribery,

bribery, the juror be guilty of perjury, and the court-martial be stigmatized with corruption.—Are not the grand council of the nation assembled in parliament, equally bound by their oath, their honour and integrity? Is it not their duty, as rational agents, to discuss each question? as impartial agents to weigh each argument? and as free agents to decide in favour of the preponderating scale?—Or are their consciences composed of such pliant and easy stuff, whose intrinsic merit is not affected, while one part is uniformly softened, by the smooth oiliness of administration, to receive its every form and impression; while another part, being immersed glowing hot into the hissing waters of opposition, is so uniformly hardened, that it cannot coalesce with particles of such different temperament?

The practice of pre-determination, however, is, in many respects, justifiable and laudable. Whoever has pledged himself to support a system of measures, must not weakly relinquish the cause he espoused, or cowardly desert his partizans in the doubtful conflict. Firm fortitude is as essentially necessary for

the statesman as the warrior. The desertion of an ally, or an accidental repulse, stimulates, the noble character, to greater exertions, and more persevering circumspection. He timidly submits not to a disgraceful treaty, nor is he weakly depressed by an unsuccessful campaign.—If a British senator, viewing with anxious apprehension the application of the French fraternizing kiss, or delusive Circean cup of republicanism, to the lips of his patriotic countrymen, (then truly converted into the swinish multitude;) fearing, lest the sanguine cap, of false liberty, should be crested o'er a field of gules, whose dexter chief is charged with a guillotine proper, on Albion's shield; alarmed, lest the mortal seed of the regicide tree, should vegetate and flourish in his native soil, bearing death and woe to his country; if a British senator, entertaining such sentiments, imagined, that he could not prevent the importation of such poisonous infusions, such emblematically destructive arms, and such pernicious fruits, into the ports of our realm, without interrupting the intercourse of nations, should say—Perish our commerce

for

for a time *, i. e. (relinquish our silks, fopperies, and luxuries, rather than our Herculean frame, deprived of its lion-skin, or wholesome staple garb of woollen, should be invested with the coat of Nessus, or exposed to the pestilential vapours of an infected atmosphere;) expel all aliens and check the ravages of this wide-spreading *plague*;—Must he weakly withdraw the embargo while the disorder rages? Must he instantly readmit those perturbed spirits, who love to lave in a sea of blood, and whose “sole delight is ever to do ill?” or must he yield to the inflammatory fever, because its malignancy has increased, while medicine can supply antidotes, and while the constitution is unimpaired?—Certainly not.—Whoever originally deemed the present war just and necessary; just, as undertaken in defence of allies, and agreeable to the stipulation of treaties; necessary, for

* These well known words have been malignantly attributed to Mr. Windham, both in your honourable house, and every opposition print, when Mr. Hardinge has more than once generously avowed himself the original deliverer.

the security of social order, the preservation of property, the suppression of turbulent malcontents, and the Balance of Power; whoever sanctioned the conduct of administration by his vote; cannot consistently withdraw his support, or refuse the supplies necessarily requisite for carrying on the war with success; until the threatened dangers are removed, the designs of the disaffected frustrated, government established on a solid basis, and the rights of our allies vindicated or admitted; or unless our funds are exhausted, our fleets and armies defeated, and we are ignominiously compelled to submit to the domineering insolence and terms of superior power—Yet, what feeling mind shrinks not at the horrors of war? What benevolent mind wishes not for the calm blessings of peace? But that man is little calculated for the controul of empires, who has not maturely weighed the possible consequences of war, before he deliberately resolved upon it; that man must possess little capacity, or considerable pusillanimity, who, having wittingly entered upon a war, wishes to sue for terms of peace,

peace*, conscious, at the same time, that no secure peace can be obtained.

But this period is past.—Our Executive Government has presumed, that the French Directory were capable of entering on terms of amity, and observing national faith.—Whether this presumption was just, signifies little at the present moment. The proposals of our ministry have been haughtily rejected. The professedly philosophic nation, that disclaimed all conquests, but those of opinion, that decreed all wars unjustifiable, but those for liberty and self-preservation, now strongly evinces the sincerity of her professions, and practically illustrates her metaphysical system. The enemies of France are expelled from her territory.—Her armies have triumphantly subdued extensive provinces.—Not satisfied with establishing her government, or her antient boundary, but, elated with victory, she ar-

* A respectable member for the most extensive county, influenced, doubtless, by the wishes of his constituents, moved a similar amendment to his Majesty's speech, though using language of like import.

rogantly enacts decrees, declaring conquered countries an indivisible part of the Republic, and then justifies her detention of them, since their cession would violate her constitution. This insolence is unexampled. With equal propriety might Great Britain pass an Act of Parliament, that all her conquests should be unalienable from the crown. But France should consummate her domineering folly, by subjecting every member of her convention to the guillotine, that should dare to propose the repeal of this decree, otherwise such pretences are idle and frivolous.

The self-sufficient hauteur of the Directory is unparalleled—rejecting the customary forms of negotiation, and refusing to send an Ambassador to a General Congress; they insultingly condescend to receive a Minister *Plenipotentiary alone* from the King of Great Britain.—His Ministers sensibly resolved, that the proposed negotiation should neither be interrupted by informality in diplomatique etiquette, or by overbearing language.—When Lord Malmesbury arrived at Paris, the Executive

tive Directory affect astonishment, that he is not invested with full powers to conclude a definitive Treaty for the Emperor, and all the Allies. Now, could common sense ever permit any man to suppose, that the powerful Court of Vienna, would intrust its dearest interests to a foreigner and a stranger? When this difficulty is removed, they assume the airs of a froward child, that knows not its own will, or what sugar plumbs will satisfy it; they arrogate an unwarrantable superiority; dictate terms, like victors to a suppliant foe; and without deigning to specify any conditions, on which they will condescend to a general pacification, demand the ultimatum of our concessions, at the very commencement of the *pretended* negotiation.

The principles proposed by the King of Great Britain, as the basis on which a Treaty might be formed, are liberal to his Allies, generous towards France, equitable to Europe, and honourable for himself.—Is it not honourable to relinquish captured isles, without requesting compensation for yourself? Is it not equitable, to establish

an

an equal Balance of Power? Is it not generous, to afford your enemy an opportunity of procuring Peace, by reciprocal restitution? Is it not liberal, to obtain advantages for your allies, by sacrificing your own conquests?—The modern, indeed, like the ancient Gauls, are insolent in Treaty, and insatiable in their demands; they still, with Brennus, wish to cry, “*Vae victis,*” and, not satisfied with a just portion, throw the sword into the scale.—But is England so reduced, that she must become tributary to France? Must she bow the knee like a vassal, or cringe like a dependant suitor? True, indeed, she has attended the court of her affected Liege Lord, but, thank God, has not paid him homage.—For what suit or service can sculking pirates expect from the sovereign of the ocean?—Britain triumphs on her natural element, her islanders are nobly proud of their naval victories, and her waters, like the waters of the Red Sea, to the children of Israel, are a wall unto her on the right hand, and on the left: she has little to apprehend from the combined fleets of France, Spain, and Holland; and little cause to fear an invasion, till her maritime
power

power is crippled or defeated. Britain has obtained many valuable possessions, not lost *one*; Britain, in the present war, has destroyed and captured twenty-five sail of French line of battle ships, whilst the Berwick alone is captured by the enemy; destroyed and captured thirty-two frigates from 44 to 32 guns, while the enemy possess not one captured vessel of that force*; destroyed or captured seventy ships or sloops from 28 to 14 guns, while the French retain only five captured. Britain has 100,000 experienced sailors in her royal navy, and 120,000 employed in the East and West India trade, fisheries, coasters, and merchantmen; France cannot completely man even thirty sail, has no commerce to train men for the service, and to form good sailors, long discipline and experience are necessary. Britain's power is maritime, and while her navy blocks up the French fleets in their harbours, (or they can steal out only as marauders, and have not force sufficient to protect even a convoy,) she will command the isles, continue her intercourse

* The Dutch and Spanish captures are not included.

with

with distant nations, protect her commerce, and support a war by the profits of her merchandize and manufactures. Britain's merchants are princes; France's, bankrupts or paupers. Britain's exports amount to 22,000,000; France's, *not to one*. Britain can raise a loan of 18,000,000 sterling in specie in three days; France not a loan of 1,000,000 sterling in discountable paper in three weeks. Britain's artizans and manufacturers are employed, the trade and extent of * Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, and Sheffield encrease, while the trade

* That the trade of these towns has increased and is increasing, is an indisputable fact, though not in proportion to the rapid expectation of speculating land jobbers. Adjoining to Manchester alone, more ground is already planned out for building upon, than would produce a rental of 30,000l. per annum, even at 3d. per square yard, (6d. is the lowest average), and to execute the designed erections, would require ten millions sterling. So extensive indeed is the trade of Manchester and its environs of 20 miles, that more cotton is now spun by machinery, than all the people of Lancashire (400,000), solely employed in spinning, could have produced before Arkwright's invention; and more additional power applied by steam engines, than the streams of all the rivers in the county could have supplied.

of

of France is annihilated, and Lyons become a desolation.

But let us appeal to the tribunal of *reason, justice, and polity*.

Suppose Britain thus situated, arguing the rights of herself and friends, *versus* France and others, in a court of justice; that after hearing evidence, the judge refers the cause to the arbitration of three gentlemen of known probity, *reason, justice, and polity*, under this direction, that “proportionable restitution shall be made to France, from the islands of Britain, for any concession France may grant to the friends of Britain from her adjoining enclosures.” Previous to their quarrel, the parties at issue had all procured excellent plans of their estates, and their boundaries had been accurately ascertained, compared, and allowed, and on the extensive lake that separated B—’s premises from F—’s, the many large and productive islands particularly specified. When the cause came to be heard, the arbitrators instantly requested the surveyed charts. On comparing them a great difference appeared, for F—’s line of demarcation was extended

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on almost every possible side. Astonishment sat on the brow of the referees, but they patiently waited the opening of the case by B—'s advocate, who immediately rose, and thus began :

GENTLEMEN,

MY client is a man of honourable character, and of a peaceful disposition; yet, unfortunately, often engaged in broils, for the good of his neighbours.—He is happy in stating his case to you, and doubts not but he shall obtain an attentive hearing.

For more than a century the ancestors of my client have had frequent litigations relative to an extensive estate, called Belgic farm : they never had any desire to obtain possession of the aforesaid premises for themselves, but to check the encroachments of F—e, whose estate is already overgrown, and whose disposition is so selfish, that the more he acquires, the more he wishes.—Now this farm is situated on that part of the opposite side of the lake, where it is narrowest, and as the defendant F, is of a
turbulent

turbulent disposition, frequently ravages and plunders the lands of his neighbours, professes great enmity against my client, and possesses a considerable number of boats, by which he might transport his marauding parties to my client's paternal domains ; the forefathers of my client have uniformly opposed any pretensions of F.'s to this extensive and populous district ; and in the year 1713, in the court of Utrecht, obtained a verdict that alienated it from him and his heirs for ever, and entailed it on another family, of whom my client entertained not such apprehensions. While the present contest had been pending, the vassals of F. have broken down the fences of his neighbours, seized the whole Belgic farm, obtained possession of the Savoy vineyard, the pleasant seats of Avignon and Nice, and several other estates ; but the servants of my client, in order to check his ravages, and diminish his power, have seized his boats, and almost expelled them from the lake ; have taken his productive islands and distant settlements ; and prevent his family from being regularly supplied with timber, sugar, spirits, coffee, tea, spices, &c. Under these circumstances the cause was brought

before the court. Agreeably to the directions of the judge, I have received instructions from my client to the following purport :

His possessions are entire, consequently he requires no restoration for himself ; but if F. will relinquish the Belgic farm to his friends, he will cede to F. all his sugar islands, spice islands, fisheries, and other conquests ; which he thinks will amply compensate F. for such arrangement ; but if, gentlemen, you should think this satisfaction inadequate, I am farther instructed to enter more particularly on the subject, and to discuss any contested point more at large.

The Council for the defendant arose.

GENTLEMEN,

I AM ordered by my employer to state, that though he reluctantly complied to submit his dispute to a Court, he did not hold himself obliged to abide by its decision, if not conformable to his own inclination ; that he has entered into no bonds of arbitration ; that he has no peers

by whose verdict he is compelled to abide ; that he has *sworn*, that the Belgic farm, the Savoy vineyard, and the seats of Avignon and Nice, shall be included in his ring-fence; that he *will* have all islands and distant settlements restored ; and when these concessions are made, will then declare his farther demands.

The advocate of B. replied : The oath of F. is in direct violation of every principle of law and equity, is invalid and must be retracted, because in opposition to superior obligations. Such conduct, indeed, is better adapted to the blustering bully, than the dispassionate citizen. As F. disclaims your authority, and will not abide by the established decisions of the realm ; as he affects to be the sole arbiter of his quarrel, and sole framer of the conditions, he will obey ; since he * despises reason, disregards justice, and prefers his private interest to general polity ; my client necessarily appeals to the supremacy of the nation, which has heretofore subjected this

* Sic volo, sic jubeo, sit pro ratione voluntas.

rebellious chief; and in the mean time will exert his every effort, to humble this insulting enemy, protect his servants, and support his friends. Thus, if, under the Gothic system, a haughty chieftain, so acting, would rouse the indignant feelings of each noble baron; the arrogant demands of France, re-echoed through Europe, will alarm every generous state, and stimulate them unitedly to reduce this self-despotic power to a just obedience of its received laws, not only by a ban of the empire, but by the force of its arms.

As the Executive Directory have delivered no memorial, presented no proposition of the terms on which they will accede to a general pacification; but as they once professedly admitted the principles of restitution, compensation, and reciprocal arrangement, to constitute a proper basis, on which our Plenipotentiary might proceed to work; it may be a curious investigation, to trace what ideas they annexed to these words, and in what sense they interpreted them. There are two notes in the Redacteur of the 22d and 24th of December last,

last, carrying an official appearance, and which may be considered as the counter-declaration of France, that will assist us in this inquiry.

The inviolability of their constitution is the golden image, to which all nations, princes, and potentates must *implicitly* bow down. Their decrees must be irrevocable, their laws eternal, and their treaties universally obligatory. A new race of Medes and Persians has sprung up—their fiat altereth not—Belgium, Savoy, Nice and Avignon, constitute an indivisible part of their republic, therefore, according to their acceptation, were not included under the term restitution. To construe this text in a different sense, were treachery, perfidy, and treason. Belgium alone, therefore, contains ground sufficient to separate the negotiating parties. For Belgium is to England the key of the continent, the territory she would never cede to France, even in the most exhausted state of her power and finances, and a country guaranteed to the Emperor by solemn treaties. But there are other irremovable obstacles to impede
their

their union : if the note alluded to is authentic, France expects that Portugal must reimburse her for the expences of the war ; that her allied estates of the empire shall not be subjected to the controul of his Imperial Majesty ; and that some species of indemnification (Jamaica or Gibraltar) is due to Spain, for the cession of Domingo. Under the article restitution, she may include not only her own isles and forts, but the ships captured at Toulon, and a compensation for those destroyed ; she may presume the restoration of the Dutch East India ships, and the Cape and Ceylon to be yielded to her tributary. She may have stipulated, in her *inviolable* private treaties, the cession of some imperial fiefs to perfidious Prussia ; or the exclusion of the ecclesiastical electorates from the Roman Diet, as a reciprocal arrangement for giving up the Italian states.

The haughty, abrupt, and offensive dismissal of Lord Malmesbury proves, beyond a possibility of doubt, the lofty pretensions of the Directory, They appear little to have apprehended, that Belgium would be insisted

insisted upon, as a *sine quâ non*, for * “ the whole of Belgium is guaranteed to them by a line of formidable neutrality.” The machiavelian conduct of France, and the short-sighted policy of Frederic William, will soon be disclosed to Europe: For France’s *motto* is, *Divide et impera*; her *rule*, make separate treaties with secret articles; her *object*, to make each state deceive its ally, and *then*, deceive them all. That France acts only from interested motives; that she is insensible to every principle of honour; that she is incapable of observing the faith of treaties, is incontestibly evident from Adet’s note to the Secretary of the United States. In open violation of a solemn treaty, in direct contradiction of a specific article, expressed in as clear words as language can supply, stipulating, “ that free ships should make free goods,” she demands the renunciation of this article; and why?—*Because it is disadvantageous to her.*

* Redacteur 22d.

† The greater part of the powers of the coalition have already recognized our right to compensations, and have guaranteed them to us by solemn treaties. Redacteur, Dec. 22d.

If this be not, “ to trample under foot the most sacred conventions; to violate shamefully the faith of treaties; if this proposition be not openly infamous,” my idea of political obligations is strangely erroneous. Whether France, then, is capable of terms of amity and national faith, is scarcely problematical.

But however exorbitant the expectations of France, however extensive the boundaries she has chalked out for herself, and however cunningly she has devised secret articles to ~~sanction~~ her ambitious projects; England can never moderate her demands by humiliation, diminish her self-formed line of demarcation, by submission, or counteract her chicanery by listening to the insidious proposals of a separate peace. Not intimidated by the threats of a quintuple Directory, “ *Delenda est Carthago*,” or even alarmed by the menaces of partitioning Prussia, countenancing disobedient subjects, England will never desert the gallant Austria, will ever “ dare to disdain” a peace, degrading to her allies, dishonourable to her arms, and destructive to her interests. Possessing

fessing the empire of the ocean, the commerce of both worlds, and produce of France's conquered isles, the British nation will never relinquish the vanquished possessions of her enemy, unless her allies are benefited by the cession; will not cease to harass her coasts, interrupt her navigation and intercept her convoys, until the high tone of dictatorial France shall be softened to a milder strain, and answer in responsive echo to the sounds of moderation and humanity. Though the glory of Britain will ever descend from her naval throne, to solicit the soft fair hand of lovely peace, on honourable terms; her glory, surely, will never cringingly dance attendance in the chamber of disgrace, degradingly to woo her meretricious embraces, or submit to the haughty airs of painted charms, that delusively dazzle to betray, and lure to destroy.

Sorry, indeed, am I to find that a professed patriot of England is converted into the able advocate of France; sorry am I to find the "shallow capacity and superficial reasoning" of the Minister of the Executive Directory,

Directory, amply supplied by the sound judgment, ingenious arguments, and political information of a British senator ; sorry am I to find, the cause of the National Convention warmly espoused, resolutely defended, and vigorously supported in St. Stephen's chapel ; sorry am I to find France supplied with the most specious pretences for her incorporation of Belgium, by a right honourable councillor of the King of Great Britain, and her rights by him asserted from Corsican example ; sorry, for the interest of my country, that she should be deprived of a natural guardian, and injured by her own offspring ; and sorry, for the honour of my country, that a true-born Englishman should willingly propose, when victorious, the cession of those territories to a dangerous foe, which his ancestors, when defeated, have for centuries disdained to guarantee to him.

But there are 38 gentlemen of the House of Commons, that coincide in opinion with the honourable mover of the amendment to the Minister's address ; thirty-eight, who suppose that the memorials and other propositions,

positions, submitted by his Majesty's Plenipotentiary to the directory of France, prove the *insincerity* of our administration, because the surrender of the Netherlands is there insisted upon as a *sine quâ non*. If these gentlemen occupied the Treasury Bench, they, consequently, would immediately transmit a courier to France, with the humiliating, disgraceful, and dishonourable proposition of their cession; and if this sop would not satisfy Cerberus, (the five-headed, not the three-headed monster) they would traverse the most fertile and luxuriant provinces of Europe, to gratify him with delicious morsels. But that period, I trust, is far distant, when his Majesty will listen to such advisers; that day is far distant, when the majority of the House will sanction such measures, or the spirit of the British nation tamely tolerate such aggrandisement of their rival.

But the Netherlands, it is stated, may be purchased. Upon what terms? Let France hold the balance, and place all her conquered isles and possessions, together with the cornucopia of peace in one scale, Belgium in the other, Belgium shall preponderate. We cannot

cannot therefore buy, for France will not sell, or at least England has not bullion sufficient to reach her price; and if the merchandize of Great Britain is excluded from the best continental market, except by the circuitous rout of Hamburgh or Leghorn, she is not likely to grow richer. But by purchase, we may understand, that the expences of another campaign will more materially injure the interests of England, than the cession of the Netherlands. On this ground we will meet our opponents. War certainly is a calamity, and in war all suffer. But suffering, as Britain suffers, she suffers not like her enemy, and can more easily repair her losses. For every thousand men, and every ship of war, that England has lost, France has lost * twenty. The pro-

* Three campaigns France sent 1,200,000 men into the field. It is computed by the most experienced Generals, that one-fourth at least, perish by the change of climate and severity of the weather, and, doubtless, one-twelfth have been destroyed in the French battles, so that in three years she must have lost twelve hundred thousand, independent of her losses by sea; while England certainly has not lost much more than sixty thousand in any three years. For the navy proportion, *vide* page 15.

vinces

vinces of France have been ravaged and laid desolate, while England has enjoyed the calm of peace, amidst the surrounding din of war. Misfortunes should make men moderate. But will a politician assert, that because war is an evil, and your enemy insolent, though feeble and exhausted, that you must yield to his every exorbitant demand to avoid this evil? Would he not more justly argue, that because both would equally experience the horrors of war, both should equally endeavour to obtain the blessings of peace, by proportional concessions; and does not history universally inform him, that if a nation once buys peace from its foe, it encourages another attack, and enables him to conquer by the weapons it has supplied: and would he not farther rationally infer, that if France will insist upon the Netherlands, to augment its continental power, Britain shall retain the conquered isles, to augment her naval strength?

The suggested amendment states the *insincerity* of our administration, because the surrender of the Netherlands is insisted upon

upon as a *sine quâ non*. What constitutes *sincerity*, but openness, candour, and plain dealing. Now to insist upon the restitution of *all* his dominions to his Imperial Majesty, is it not an explicit and open demand? To require the evacuation of Italy, by the French troops, is certainly a plain and clear stipulation. On these conditions, to propose the entire and unreserved restitution of all the conquests made on France, is doubtless an honest and candid declaration. To require a compensation for the Spanish part of St. Domingo, and the comprehension of Portugal, in the negotiation, without burthen some conditions, are terms express and pointed.—Whether existing circumstances entitled administration to make such demands, is not the present question, but whether their proposals for peace convict them of insincerity; which charge, opposition cannot easily make good, either from the memorial, or conduct of Lord Malmesbury.

But as all political sincerity is comparative, the proceedings of the Executive Directory exhibit a new medium, that will present this
historical

historical painting in its proper light or shade. To reject the accustomed forms of negotiation, by a general congress, would render a cautious statesman suspicious.—To establish it as an essential principle that all treaties are to be concluded at Paris alone, would make an equal enemy jealous and distrustful.—To demand that an English ambassador should treat for the imperial court, will bear the construction of an insidious manœuvre.—To refuse the diplomatic usage of ministers reciprocally exchanging the respective demands and concessions of their government, and insist upon a categorical memorial from the King of Great Britain, is a piece of artful chicanery.—Thus to gain information of the principal points of your enemy's claims and expectations, without communicating your own propositions, is a proceeding neither frank, open, or liberal.—Then to require an ultimatum in twenty-four hours, i. e. (a memorial never to be recalled or amended, containing a final statement, specifying every particular demand with precision, yet comprehending the general interest of extensive empires; a statement, which, if acceded to, would

decide on the lives, fortunes, and happiness of thousands of thousands; if rejected, continue the destructive ravages of war, at least, another campaign) is a mode of conduct, as unprecedented, as it is illiberal and offensive. Presumptuous, indeed, must that man be, who imagined that his ability, information, or judgment, would justify him in framing such a memorial in the short space of one day.—Affectedly indignant at the rejection of what it was impossible to effect, the Executive Directory command Lord Malmesbury to leave Paris in forty-eight hours, and their territory as soon as possible. But to finish with the grand climax of French *sincerity* for peace, her minister officially states, that the government will listen to no proposals contrary to their (self-framed) constitution, their (private) laws, and (secret) treaties, which *bind* the republic. To judge then of the sincerity of his Majesty's ministers, and the Executive Directory, (in their expressed desires of peace, and as exemplified also in their conduct) by comparative light and shade, present to your mind's eye, some celebrated night-piece of a Spanish master, and

and the luminous torches of Britain will so dazzle the sight, that the sombrous and distant shades of France become invisible.

The Demosthenes of opposition states that every basis must be futile, illusory, and unmeaning, that is not founded either upon a *status quo ante bellum*, or the *uti possidetis*. But the French will not accede to either as a basis. However desirous they may be to extend their European frontiers, they will not relinquish their quondam Indian possessions. However they may vindicate their detention of the Netherlands from the wishes of the Belgians, they will not admit the same arguments applicable to the inhabitants of Martinique and St. Domingo. For whatever country has been delivered to France, is their's by voluntary cession; whatever isles or forts have admitted the English, they have been introduced by perfidy and treason. So that according to the ipse dixit of this honourable patriot, even *he himself* could not have fixed upon a solid basis, though he would “* totally disavow every principle on which the war was undertaken,” though so far

* Vid. Debate of December 30th, 1796.

from "carrying high pretensions, he would go to the other extreme," and so far from being "exorbitant and unreasonable in his demands, he would be below the mark of what he might fairly claim as equitable." Did it occur to the mind of this celebrated orator, when using such language, that more than three hundred members of your honourable house have for four years uniformly avowed this war to be just and necessary? or did he presume that his eloquent harangue would produce such instantaneous conviction, on the minds of men so long habituated to entertain contradictory sentiments, that they would immediately sign a recantation of their errors, and declare the absolute and unlimited supremacy of French principles and doctrines?—A noble burgher, for the benefit of his fellow-citizens, went, honourably attended, submissively to surrender Calais to the conquering Edward, but *not* till all resistance was vain—the character of that man will never be nobly recorded in the annals of history, who would treacherously bear the keys of England's submission, that enable your enemy not only to confine the body, but imprison the mind,

mind, while her bulwarks are unimpaired and her forts impregnable. But if this leader of the anti-ministerialists obtains not a seat in the cabinet, till he has eradicated, from the minds of a majority of your house, that conviction which has so long regulated their measures, till he has proved to them, that this war was not only always unjust and unnecessary, but the conduct of every successive government of France honourable, wise, and just; that the rights of our allies were never infringed; the turbulence of our discontented mal-contents never fomented; and the cause of liberty never professed to be supported throughout the world; he will occupy the opposition bench another campaign at least: and if, indeed, the Executive Directory should be mad enough to insist upon a * “total disavowal of every principle on which the war was undertaken,” as a preliminary to negotiation, I trust that the characteristic spirit of every Briton would disdainfully reject such a proposition, boldly assert his independence, both of thought and action, and dare his foe *usque ad inter-
necionem*.

* This he considers as a necessary preliminary.

The sincerity of ministers in negotiation is further impeached, because their proposals are exorbitant and unreasonable, because they offer "brass for gold," when they could only expect iron. According to this statement, Belgium alone is of seven hundred times the value of all the captured isles and forts; though the French part of St. Domingo alone, would yield double the produce of Jamaica, and would annually employ 400 vessels of 500 tons each. It is further asserted, that if we could wish France to restore the Netherlands, we must give the Cape to her.—Thus argues an advocate for the interests of France.—But vary the propositions of England.—Would the Cape satisfy France for her conquered isles?—No. Would she relinquish her West India isles for the possession of Belgium? No. She cannot exist, as a commercial nation, without her West India possessions.—Are these cessions then of no value?—Do these cessions require no compensation?—If France must, and will have the Netherlands, we must, and shall retain our conquests; and if the emperor will find great difficulty in obtaining these provinces, France will find it

it equally difficult to acquire a naval superiority, and re-possess her isles.

Wherein, then, consists the monstrous enormity of his majesty's propositions?— So far from being assumingly exorbitant, excessively immoderate, or offensively unreasonable; it becomes a doubtful point whether administration are justifiable, (from the relative situation of the Belligerent powers) in conceding so much and demanding nothing. With respect to Holland, if the Executive Directory will retain the United Provinces tributary and dependant, England can never relinquish her possession of the Cape of Good Hope, without endangering her East India possessions, and exposing her ships to the continual hazard of capture or detention. The possession of the Cape is ten times more valuable to England, (from the extent of her Indian dominions, her immense intercourse with those climes, and the security thence afforded to her shipping) than it would be to France. If the United Provinces continue subjected to the government of Paris, not an Indiaman could venture to touch at this convenient

harbour, either for victualling or water, left a war should have taken place between the naturally hostile powers of Britain and France, and she should be detained as a prize. Would France reinstate Holland to her former political situation, then a different arrangement might be adopted; but England can never relinquish the Cape to her great political opponent, consistently with her own interest, polity, and security.

Would you behold full-blown ambition perfectly exhibited, transfer your eye to the towering balloon of France, whose car is occupied by the quintuple directory. They rapidly ascend, well supplied with charts and telescopes, and their air-sworn pride knows not in what region of the atmosphere to begin their extensive plan. They mount, however, till the last sand-bag is thrown out, and when their equipoise is found, traverse the adjoining countries, sail on with prosperous gales, and commence their operations. Having passed their original boundaries, they examine with bird's-eye view a vast plain, and by telescopic assistance find it well cultivated, rich, and populous;

populous; here fenced by the sea, there bounded by a noble and rapid river. They observe this country overrun by their troops, and therefore unanimously declare that this district would form a pretty appendage to their dominions, that *nature* has pointed it out as a proper frontier, and then insert it in their chart as unalienable from their property, and extend their line of demarkation on the sea, till it is bounded by the river. *Actum est*—It is decreed, and their decrees are irrevocable.—In a second aeronautical expedition, they annex a considerable contiguous duchy to their domains, because its lord was poor, instantly take possession of it, and boldly proclaim it an indivisible part of their estate. *Actum est, &c.*—In a third voyage, their inflated machine having lost great part of its gas, got entangled in the trees of a forest, and was not extricated without great loss, with difficulty got home, and their sketched enlargement torn away. They have made several unsuccessful attempts to soar over the ocean, but sometimes they have met with gun-boats, that have brought them into the sea, sometimes with adverse winds, that have stopt their course, for though they
may

may ride in the air, they cannot govern the whirlwind or direct the storm. But still these projectors will not relinquish their new mode of surveying, choosing, and partitioning; and “like little wanton boys,” are so elevated from their having once floated in a region of glory, that they forget that the airy bubbles that supported them, continually lose their strength, that they derived their ascending power from fermentation, and without receiving continual inflammable supplies, must gradually fall down to their original level—“Towering ambition o’ervaults itself and falls on t’ other side—”

We may now enquire what advantages England has obtained by the proposed negotiation. These indeed are *many* and *great*. Europe is now convinced that the French took not arms for *self-defence alone*; that they expelled not their enemy beyond their own frontiers to obtain *peace alone*; that their democratic system comprehends a plan of * *conquest, plunder, and*

* In Mr. Chauvelin’s Note to Lord Grenville, dated May 12th, 1792, it is stated, “that whatever might be the fate of arms in that war, France rejected all ideas of aggrandizement.”

aggrandizement ; that Paris is to be the center of all negotiations.—Paris, where the acts of their constitution are superior to the droit public of nations ; that every proposition for peace must be frank and open, i. e. must specify every cession the petitioner will make, every sacrifice he will offer, every humiliation he will submit to, and if the cringing suppliant should omit to name the most valuable jewel he possesses, or attempt to stipulate conditionally, this arbitrary potentate spurns him from his presence, and orders him from his court. The British people and representatives are now fully assured that this war, even if not heretofore, is at the present period just and necessary—just, for the support and interest of our allies, and for the preservation of our independence ; necessary, for the security of our Indian possessions*, checking the insatiable ambition of a dictatorial pentarchy, restoring public laws, rights and balance, to the powers of Europe, now endangered by preponderating France, whose Colossal feet extend from Nice to the Rhine, whose

* By retaining the Cape of Good Hope.

expanded

expanded hands overreach and controul Spain, Italy, and Holland.

What then remains for England?—Shall she degradingly truckle to her rival?—Shall she debasingly submit to the insolence of her enemy?—Shall this jealous nation, (whose erst noble spirit constantly insisted upon the demolition of Dunkirk as a preliminary,) dastardly cede an extensive line of opposite coast and five millions of people, to the only foe whose attacks are to be apprehended?—Shall she conclude a disadvantageous treaty, acknowledge her own comparative weakness, strengthen the power of France, and thereby encourage her to another aggressive war.—Britons,—Rome conquered not Carthage, till her navy had overcome the Punic fleet.—Rome conquered not Carthage, till her irresolute inhabitants had twice negotiated a humiliating and concessive treaty.—This *would-be* Rome possesses the envenomed malignity of ancient Rome, would exterminate the British name and erase our noble metropolis; but she must first defeat the royal navy of England, must first compel her to admit the superiority of French valour,

valour, power, and resources, or to manifest her pusillanimous spirit, by preferring the gratifying ease and temporary interest of a suspension of hostilities, (a secure peace can never be obtained by degradation,) to the generous, manly, and unremitted exertions of her characteristic constitutional vigour; which, when strenuously and spiritedly applied, has ever repulsed an insolent gasconading foe, compelled him to relinquish the ocean's sovereignty with ignominy, to sue for peace, at least, on equal terms, and permit us to enjoy an uninterrupted * tranquillity with honour and dignity.

If then, immediate, trifling, presumptive interest, influences not your conduct more powerfully than distant, important, and certain good; if temporary ease is not to be obtained at the great hazard of future durable pain; if the generous spirit of British nobility, startling, and indignantly shrinking, even at the idea of submission, circulates through your frame; if the county

* Otium cum dignitate.

knight,

knight, or hospitable squire, must hereafter glory, not only in his *personal*, but his *national* independance ; if the respectable British merchant, will not relinquish his superior advantages in general commerce, for the petty immediate profits of a jobbing pedlar ; if the military character wishes not to tarnish the fair fame of his sovereign ; if the naval officer will not unlauzel his brow to decorate a vanquished foe ; if the civilian, having long gazed on the fair form of Britain's constitution, having experienced the sweetness of her disposition, admired the delicate symmetry of her limbs, the elegant contour of her face, and the glow of health on her cheek, has become enamoured with her person, and would not resign this fair charmer to " feed on garbage ;" if the friend of his country will not sacrifice her faith, her honour, her dignity, her security, her independance, at the infernal shrine of party-rancour, or to the sanguinary and implacable demons of democracy—the war must be supported.

But for what end, and with what provisos ?—The objects for which we contend
are

are now generally understood by his majesty's memorial;—with respect to the mode of conducting the war, or raising supplies, however we may coincide with administration in the principle of their necessity, we may justly differ from them relative to the means. A continental war has justly been abandoned, and if the Netherlands must be recovered for the emperor, they must be obtained by his arms or our naval victories. English soldiers are raised and maintained at a greater expence than those of other European powers; their line of operation is more extended and subject to interruption, when acting on the continent, and their depots too remote. It is better to subsidize a military force, than transport one. As to supplies, loans must be raised and their interest paid, but the premier's * judgment is not infallible, for many of his taxes has he caused to be withdrawn, in the produce of others been deceived, some commuted ones has he restored, and from

* Mr. Pitt's loans and lotteries have in general been ably negotiated, but in these your interference and judgment are not so essentially and frequently required as in his taxes.

other intended ones, timidly been dissuaded. For a financier some grand outline may, perhaps, be sketched, by which his plans should be circumscribed.—Taxes should affect individuals in a progressive ratio*, proportionate to their properties, for they who have the greatest interest at stake should bear the greatest charge†. Allowed necessities should never be taxed, if luxuries can furnish a sufficient revenue. Those duties are preferable which can be collected

* In the infancy of Rome under Servius Tullius, if 193 men or pounds were to be raised,

£.			
Possessors of 600 and upwards proportionally raised	98		
450	-	-	22
300	-	-	22
150	-	-	20
75	-	-	30
37	-	-	1
			193

The servants, and additional window, tax, are on this principle, with that *peculiar* exception of 20l. only for three or any greater number of houses—the 10 per cents.—stamps for legacies—bills of exchange, &c. &c.

† The first cost of salt is 6d. per bushel of 56 lb. Duty 5s. This and the Duty on coals carried coast-ways, candles, and soap affects the poor in a very disproportionate manner.

at the least expence, and are least liable to be evaded; which the consumer pays in the * purchase of the article, or connectedly with the value; and which produces obliquely, rather than immediately to Government.—Those are the properest † objects for taxation in the time of war, which are benefited by the war.—All taxes that are ‡ personal and distinctive, that
pres

* Every person more willingly pays 2s. duty for eight yards of print, than 2s. stamp duty for a hat.

† From the danger of the enemy's cruizers, and consequent advance of Insurance, immense quantities of merchandize, &c. are conveyed by inland navigation from London to Liverpool, Hull to Bristol, &c. &c. and several canals pay to the proprietors 25l. per cent. What well-founded objection can there be to 2s. or even 4s. per ton annual, temporary duty, on each vessel—how easily and cheaply would it be collected, and its produce would be considerable.—If his Grace of B. and others should complain, because they are limited in their charge of tonnage by Parliament, we may reply, that they have easily made 5s. per ton, 7s. 6d. *warehouse room included.*

‡ The Chancellor of the Exchequer has incurred greater odium by the powder tax, and additional port wine duty, among the middle ranks of society, especially those of a stated income, than he would have sustained by less partial taxes, that would have produced

press particularly on classes or individuals, are unpopular and impolitic. When great supplies are to be obtained, articles of constant and universal consumption, supply the best ways and means; for a multiplicity of taxes encrease the expence of * collecting, and are more troublesome to the community.—If the produce, manufactures or merchandize of a country *décisively* command the foreign market, the bounty on such articles may be withdrawn, their drawback † diminished, and other nations compelled

four times their amount. In the great scarcity of corn, the powder tax might be tolerated, and these and similar taxes easily pass through the House, because its members are little affected by them; but if the present administration must ever have recourse to popular sentiment for maintaining their situation on the Treasury Bench, these two taxes will deprive them of more friends, than all the other during this war.

* The produce of the properly repealed taxes on gloves, burials, baptisms, and marriages, was half expended in the collection of them, were odious and trifling.

† Mr. Pitt has adopted this principle with respect to sugars, diminishing the drawback one-fourth, which produces 200,000—for the same reasons, the drawback on rum might be lowered one-sixth—on salt one-tenth, and without danger; and immense quantities

pelled to contribute to the support of its government, * &c. &c.

On subjects of finance, the friends and well-wishers of the Premier, and supporters of the war, may oftentimes properly, wisely, and conscientiously differ from him. The Minister must not disoblige, intentionally, an individual member, much less, large bodies of powerful men, who might instantly array themselves in the opposite rank. He apprehends no desertion, when he taxes the poor farmer's cart, which, with the labour and expence of three horses, carries one ton of corn or manure, two shillings; but let him propose some immensely productive taxes, and the whole body of merchants would, perhaps, unitedly, exclaim, that their commerce was ruined, threaten him with the most virulent

tities of salt are now smuggled on the coast, and the revenue much injured. Such supplies are raised without any expence in collecting, and without a possibility of evasion. Foreigners can purchase salt seven-eighths, and even sugar one-seventh less than Englishmen.

* This subject may be treated on more largely perhaps hereafter.

opposition, fill the House with petitions, and intimidate him from pursuing his purpose. Silk is taxed 7s. 6d. per pound, as a luxury, the Minister dares not attempt to tax cotton-wool (which may be fabricated to produce * five guineas per pound) one † penny. If then, the Minister is compelled to adapt his taxes to the *passing* humour of the House; if money is not to be obtained, where riches abundantly circulate, and the floating currency is great, in one grand sum easily collected, because the opulent merchants and India proprietors, coalesce in opposing such a plan; a Minister (particularly if brought into power by the monied and mercantile interest) is little culpable, because he raises piddling supplies, on disadvantageous terms, from the horse and cart, beer, candle, cyder, or ‡

* Cotton has been spun to 250 hanks in the pound, of 850 yards each, in length 121 miles 540 yards.

† At this trifling tax, cotton-wool would produce five times the revenue of silk.—Query—Is there not some compromise between Ministers and the West Indian Merchants relative to cotton, that pensions may be granted to worthy patriots and superannuated officers?

‡ Tea, from the advanced price of other provisions, is now almost a necessary article to the lowest ranks of society.

tea,

tea, of a rack-rented submissive tenant. But that independant country gentleman is highly culpable, who, knowingly, aids the passing of an act, that disproportionally affects the landed interest, the loyal and patriotic yeomanry and peasantry, and the commercial and manufacturing members of the community ; for though the war is supported for the maintenance and security of the liberty, honour, and property of all, the nabobs of the east, in addition to this security, have hereby obtained the costly spices of Ceylon, and a safer navigation and provision for their fleets, by the capture of the Cape ; here, also, the southern whalers, and Nootka fur ships may victual and water ; and the aggregate body of merchants have acquired more, and lost less, during the present, than in any former, war ; have greatly extended their West India, American, and * Baltic trade, whilst their rivals are despoiled of their foreign possessions, deprived of their capital (and credit commands commerce) and their manufactures,

* Four thousand four hundred and fifty-five British ships paid the Sound duties in 1796—French ships not one.

for exchange, are destroyed—Short-sighted policy, indeed, apprehends great detriment from a tax on raw materials; and a narrow-minded * calculator considers the immediate payment of money to government, as so much deducted from his possible profit; but it ultimately reckons little, whether manufactures are raised by the increased price of labour (for labour advances proportionally with taxes on necessaries, otherwise the mechanic and peasant must speedily be supported by the parish) or by an assessed impost on the rude article. The last mode is simple and cheaply collected, the former circuitous, expensive, troublesome, and impolitic.

But must not every well-founded objection, that the British merchant or manufacturer might entertain, of rivalry from other nations, be entirely removed; when it can incontestibly be proved, that your house, and the kingdom at large, have procured, and are procuring, such advantages,

* The interested sophistry of Merchants and Manufacturers have confounded the common sense of mankind.—SMITH's *Wealth of Nations*, vol. ii. b. 4. c. 3.

that will amply compensate for any such duties, and enable them to traffic on lower terms with other countries.—Canals are formed and forming in every county in the kingdom, the conveyance of coals and other articles facilitated, and their price reduced ; and if you adopt the merchants plan of a dock, you save them, (i. e.) gain them, by their own statement, 450,000*l.* per annum.

The commerce of Great Britain can alone man such vast armaments, alone support such expensive campaigns as the present war has demanded. To encourage and patronize commerce therefore, to render England the depot of both hemispheres, and London, the emporium of the world, is the greatest national object that can occupy your attention.—Take away every impediment that clogs the grand machine, diminish its friction, and give rapidity to its motion. Let not the frivolous objections of the * Commissioners of Customs, (who report, “ though they cannot form any founded opinion ;” who, to a well-digested and accurately surveyed plan, oppose

* Vid. their Report to the Lords of the Treasury on this subject.

an “*if*,” and an “idea that has *occurred* ;” who object to the “extent and capacity of docks, because the number of officers would be extremely and unnecessarily multiplied ;” when thereby they would greatly be * diminished ; who, contrary to every principle of the plan, “view docks, not as places of delivery, but as places of reception for ships in easement of the river, in order to unship their cargoes on board lighters ;”) let not such crude objections, even were they supported by a Lord of the Treasury, (which we cannot suppose) prevent your accommodating the British merchants with † ample space and a secure harbour for their numerous ships ; with extensive and convenient warehouses for the stowage of their merchandize ; and with wide and open roads and streets for receiving and delivering their goods.—The spirited and honourable exertions of the corporation of Liverpool, have furnished such excellent docks and *adjoining* warehouses, that a ‡ West India-

* Vid. *infra*—the comparative detention of vessels at London and Liverpool.

† The Merchants plan comprehends 89 acres.

‡ A vessel belonging to Mr. Barton.

man arrives, unloads her cargo, re-loads, and sails in *six* days: when a * convoyed fleet arrives in the river Thames, the danger and delay of navigating the pool, the difficulty of approaching a legal quay, the tedious operation of lighters, and the deficiency of warehouse-room, produce such complicated disadvantages, that three or four months are elapsed, before a West Indiaman can *unload* her cargo.—Calculate then the loss of time and expence of the vessel, the wages of mariners, the pilferage of lighter-men, the plunder of land-pirates and crew, the damage sustained by ice, in cables, rudders, &c. &c. and it will appear no way surprising, that Liverpool merchants can undersell the Londoner within fifty miles of the metropolis, entirely supply the populous districts of Staffordshire and Warwickshire, and, if an alteration does not speedily take place, will supply the capital itself by inland navigation.—This internal superiority, in a national view, is a trifling consideration.—But, when we consider, that the produce of the East is solely brought

* In the present war 400 sail have arrived in England in one week under convoy.

to the river Thames, and a major part of the produce of our western isles, before it can be re-shipped; what immense advantages might rival states possess, if they could in any respect come in competition with us in a foreign market.—Remove then every obstruction to commerce; grant the merchants every request that interferes not with private rights; adopt the most extensive, expensive, and magnificent plans either for docks or * canals, that are submitted

* The advantages hence arising cannot be more strongly exemplified, than by exhibiting the disadvantages of a narrow canal.—The locks of the Staffordshire; (or Brindley's grand trunk) canal, that connects London with Liverpool, Hull with Bristol, and each reciprocally, are not seven feet wide, and will only admit boats of 14 tons admeasurement, carrying perhaps 20 tons.—These vessels cannot navigate either the Severn, Mersey, or Trent, consequently have their cargoes to unload and reload.—As this canal is narrower, and the friction greater, the conveyance of 20 ton is attended with nearly equal expence, as 50 ton on a broad canal.—This canal will not admit the Duke of Bridgewater's vessels, those of the Rochdale company, or any that navigate rivers, and if a boat belonging to it passes through a lock of a broad canal, it consumes 30 tons more water, which on a high level is a grand consideration.—Yet, how few members weigh these circumstances,

mitted to you (for such money expended, circulates within ourselves alone, and here truly riches will make riches) and by the benefits, and conveniencies afforded to commerce, the revenue may be increased.

So far encourage commerce, patronize our colonies, and enrich our Merchants.— But shall the freedom, the liberty, the constitution, and the lives of our fellow-countrymen be unmercifully and wantonly exchanged for the luxurious imports, and enervating spices of the east? Shall the vital strength of England flow through every vein, to gorge the greedy maw of bloated opulence? Shall that humane senate, which has regulated the Slave Trade, which endeavours its abolition, and sym-
.

cumstances, how few are there, who have not *promised* their vote for narrow canals, in opposition to a wide canal? How few, who have not supported a circuitous * rout with unnecessary locks (in the Braunston 40 miles and 32 locks) against a direct line, and gradual descent from the highest level †.

* Query---Why should not Government appoint surveyors to report to the House of Commons, on the several plans submitted to them?

† Level above high water at Birmingham 484 feet, when this canal, after having descended by many locks towards the sea, ascends by 16 locks, therefore 32 unnecessary,

thizes

thizes with an *African's* sufferings, be callous to a *Briton's* torture, suffer him to be *kidnapped* under its very eye, and *transported* to climes more distant than the Western Ind?—God forbid.

The Directors and Proprietors of the East India Company, have provoked an enquiry into their recruiting department.—An enquiry let them have.—But first mark a plain tale.

Two * female servants, of a gentleman in the neighbourhood of Goodman's-fields, were alarmed, about one o'clock in the morning, by a naked man knocking at the window, and begging, for pity's sake, that they would send for a watch-man to take him to the watch-house. They assumed courage, called up their fellow-servants, who admitted the man, and fetched a watch-man, that conveyed him to Whitechapel night-house. In due time he was taken to Lambeth street Police Office, where (the

* This circumstance took place three years back, and is related from memory ; but the outlines are certainly correct.

present Basse) Mr. Wickham then resided, to whom he related the following circumstances :

That, being a stranger in town, he was walking through Fenchurch-street, in a carter's frock, when a person accosted him, stating that he wanted a porter, and that the countryman might as well get a shilling as another.—In consequence of this application he carried a parcel to a cellar in the neighbourhood of East Smithfield, where, when he entered with his presumed employer, some men were sitting, who asked him to drink, while he was waiting for his money, and detained him some time after his receiving it, under various pretences. When at length he appeared resolute in departing, they informed him that he was enlisted for the India Company's service, soon over-came every resistance he made, forced him into a back room, and threatened to gag him, if he ceased not his cries. At night they stripped him, and confined him with another recruit, from whom he learned that a few mornings previous, a coach full of such levies had been conveyed to

to Chatham. Such information stimulated him to exert his every effort to effect his escape, and the next night being confined in a barricadoed garret, under whose window there was a pent-house, at 17 feet fall, and finding that he could get his head through the grating, after pulling off his shirt, with the grazing of his breast and shoulders, and straining his ancles, he delivered himself from his prison, and surrendered himself to justice.

Fired with honest indignation, Mr. Wickham collected his officers, personally visited this crimping house, found it far removed from a thoroughfare, ironed like a dungeon, and spiked like a prison, seized its *contracting* crew and wretched inhabitants, and brought all under custody to the police office. Long and intricate was his investigation, for the offenders had long been habituated to this practice, were dextrous manœuverers, acted by the advice of a Jew attorney, (brother to the receiver general,) who attended with the Company's act in hand, was well versed with its favouring clauses, and skilled in quibble and evasion.

evasion. But the man's tale was clear as the blaze of noon. It was fully ascertained that there was a regular system of entrapping the unwary, and of confining them in this jail, till they were conveyed by coaches * to Chatham, where a Gale † officiated as magistrate, and an Edwards as clerk. What *English laws* could give to humanity, Mr. Wickham afforded, and much was he hurt that he could not be *just* “beyond the letter of the law.” Several crimping contractors have magistrates committed, more would they have committed, if the poor deluded wretches could have found a housekeeper to have been bound with them for the prosecution of their deceivers. Here lies the rub.—If philanthropy or patriotism requires further information, there is no necessity of recurring to a Dowling or a Devereaux ‡, the police offices of the metropolis can supply

* Leaving London before day-light.

† Sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment for personating — Robinson, Esq. magistrate for Surrey, and administering oaths, as such, to recruits.

‡ Perjured witnesses against Captain Kimber, prosecuted for presumed inhumanity and murder in the slave trade.

ample materials, though India contractors carry not their recruits *there** for attestation. But the villainy is too extensive to be concealed. Of its magnitude we may form some estimate from a report of the committee of shipping of the East India directors. To prove the *salutary effects* and *cheapness* of *contracting* for the recruiting department, this report was formed; but other inferences may be drawn from it. A statement is here given of the number of recruits received from the company's officers, and from established contractors, for three years.

Years.	From Officers.	From Contractors.
In 1788	81	999
1789	137	2141
1790	18	1852
	—	—
Total	236	4992
	—	—

* When Mr. Wickham interrogated the above offenders, it appeared in evidence, that the recruits of London, in direct opposition to the act of Parliament, were always attested, (if attested,) at Chatham.

Upon

Upon an average 1664 are annually transported to India, of which number only 78 are regular volunteers; not 1 in 21. Your honourable house may boast then not only of a respectable bullock contractor, but of * human-carcase contractors; not only of West-India proprietors that negotiate for Afric's blood, but of East India proprietors that traffic for the blood of *free-born* Englishmen.—Shall these men not be † *controul-ed*? Shall tyrannical monopolizers be the sole patentees for vending Britain's liberty? Shall they annually imprison, at least for six ‡ months, 1500 of our countrymen, to save avaricious opulence a less sum of || money than 24 gentlemen expend in annual weekly § dinners at the London tavern? Shall

* Four India directors in the House of Commons are on the shipping committee.

† The Board of Controul wishes to remove such abuses.

‡ East India recruits receive no pay, are not drilled till their arrival there, (generally nine months,) and are not much better treated than blacks, under the late regulations, in the African ships.

|| Vid. Sir H. Cosby's Estimate for Barracks.

§ Directors feast there luxuriously once a week.

Leadenhall-street stockholders, not satisfied with dragooning * Englishmen like † Swiss soldiers, dictate to our executive government, and be permitted to raise recruits for India's slavish service for ‡ 151. when the poorest parishes in the kingdom give almost || twice the sum for supplies to the British navy?—We firmly trust there is no senator in your house, (except he be an India proprietor,) that to such demands will not indignantly exclaim with fiery Hotspur, “ they shall not have a § man of us, no, if a man would save their souls they shall not.”—Strange, indeed, would be the circumstance, if the most able defender of the ¶ Slave trade should be found the most strenuous advocate for British liberty; strange, if the friends of universal

* Expressions of two proprietors in the debate at the India house on this subject, and applied to the behaviour of the Board of Controul towards them.

† They reject the proposed plan of erecting barracks and disciplining men in England—because expensive.

‡ Contracting price.

|| Twenty-eight guineas have been offered in advertisements.

§ For Scot.

¶ Mr. Dundas.

emancipation should not regard the freedom of their neighbour; strange would it be, if when his Grace, Field Marshal York, and the secretary at war, have regulated the national recruiting service, and permit regular officers *alone* to enlist recruits; that a company of merchants should be suffered to introduce their Asiatic exclusive privileges and principles into Great Britain, and continue their nefarious system amidst a general reform.

By thus restraining power abused, and withdrawing privileges misapplied; by thus expanding and accelerating commercial intercourse, contributing to the advantages of merchants, and thereby ultimately advantaging the public; when the opulent willingly tax themselves in proportion to their wealth, and collect ample supplies from the quickly-circulating machine, to support the wants of the state; the House of Commons will possess the confidence of the people, retain a credit, which, we believe, they have not lately lost*; more fully ex-

* Mr. Fox thinks contrary—Debate of Dec. 30, 1796.

hibit to France and Europe the immensity of our resources, and resolute spirit of our governors; and fully convince the nation of the necessity of this war, by personally contributing liberally to its support. For it is not the peculiar duty of a representative of Great Britain to please his individual electors alone, but to satisfy the majority, if possible, the generality, of the people. When a member is returned, he becomes an universal representative for the kingdom on all national questions. Could corporate bodies dictate to their representatives, and compel them uniformly to obey their sovereign commands, a † common-hall would constantly anticipate the debates of St. Stephen's chapel, and the orator of a borough, by haranguing the populace and influencing the mob, would preclude the necessity of ministerial arguments or information, and the watchfulness or philippics of opposition. This monstrous unconstitutional doctrine was renewed, of late years, by the partizans for

† The livery of London ordered their members to censure Mr. Pitt's conduct relative to the imperial subsidy, previous to hearing his reasons and defence even in a news-paper. One obeyed.

the repeal of the Test and Corporation acts. They stipulated, on puritanical principles, to support or elect their representatives *conditionally*, and by such arts endeavoured to secure a majority of your house. But if ever you relinquish your just rights, and submit to be considered as *mere* delegates, (who must continually receive directions and instructions from their constituents) you will then find national topics, not only anticipated in Guildhall, but *wisely* and *coolly* discussed in every borough and county of the kingdom; you will establish three hundred distinct parliaments, and, as every thing would then be carried by a shew of hands, ultimately * effect universal suffrage.

* To the friends and admirers of universal suffrage, who, in general, are strong advocates for this dictatorial power of electors, we submit the following consideration. London contains about 1,400,000 inhabitants, Great Britain probably 12,000,000. As all are presumed to vote, and to be represented in proportion to their numbers; if the House of Commons consisted of 558 Members, the metropolis would elect 65. If Representatives must be subservient to the expressed will of their electors, a mob then at Copenhagen House, would dictate laws to the kingdom.

But

But we hope for better things; and relying on your firmness, wisdom, and prudence, confidently trust, that the *plebiscita* of Palace-yard (even when collected by Patrician tribunes) will never overthrow the *senatus consulta* of your house.

Your's

For the present,

LONDON,
Feb. 23, 1797.

AN ELECTOR.

HISTORY